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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 000617

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INL/LP FOR BOZZOLO WHA/CAR KATHLEEN HARNE INR/IAA BOB
CARHART TREASURY FOR ERIN NEPHEW JUSTICE FOR ROBERT LIPMAN

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TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [ASEC](#) [KCOR](#) [JM](#) [XL](#)
SUBJECT: JAMAICA: FORMER MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY

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Classified By: DCM James T. Heg, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a recent conversation with the NAS Director, Jamaica's former Minister of National Security and opposition People's National Party (PNP) leader, Peter Phillips, agreed that there is danger that Jamaica could go the way of Haiti if the current government were to fail in its reform efforts and if Portia Simpson-Miller (Phillips' rival in the PNP) were returned to power. Phillips continues to mull over whether to challenge Simpson-Miller for control of the PNP during its Party Congress in September. Phillips also encouraged the USG to continue to push the GOJ on Anti-corruption and police reform. In particular, he advised us to vocally support the current Commissioner of Police, Rear Admiral Hardley Lewin. End Summary.

English Speaking Haiti

¶2. (C) On June 27, the NAS Director met with Jamaica's former Minister of National Security, Peter Phillips, ostensibly to seek his advice on how the USG could best continue to support the current Commissioner of Police, Rear Admiral Hardley Lewin. Phillips, who when he was Minister could be quite guarded, was in a relaxed and talkative mode and the NAS Director had the opportunity to speak with him about a broad range of topics including his views on the seeming inability of the Government of Jamaica to make headway against spiraling violent crime. In the conversation the NAS Director asked Phillips' opinion of an assessment of Jamaica's future, which she had heard from several prominent Jamaicans -- that Jamaica sits at a precipice, and unless drastic measures are taken in short order then in five, maximum ten years Jamaica could become "English-speaking Haiti." Perhaps because he is now in Opposition, surprisingly Phillips not only did not reject this comparison, he agreed with it. (Ref A)

Prime Minister Golding's Ineptness

¶3. (C) Phillips stated that he has been thoroughly disappointed with the across the board "ineptness" of Prime Minister Golding's government. (Ref B) He places the blame squarely at Golding's feet for the results of a recent poll indicating that, former Prime Minister, Portia Simpson-Miller, who Phillips called a "disaster" for the country, had gained ground and now was more popular than Golding. (Note: Simpson-Miller's rise in the polls is inconvenient for Prime Minister Golding; it also hampers Phillips' ability to challenge her for leadership of the PNP during this September's party Congress.)

14. (C) Phillips stated that it was an astonishing possibility that the PNP after "running the country into the ground for the last eighteen years." could possibly come back to power. According to Phillips, Simpson-Miller, who was in a political "free fall" after the PNP's defeat in September 2007, has been energized by the most recent poll numbers. Phillips made no bones about his desire to challenge Simpson-Miller for leadership of the Party, but said that this new burst of popularity for the former Prime Minister was causing a rift among his supporters. He explained that there are elements within the PNP who are trying to convince Phillips to stay in his hand, and given Prime Minister Golding's slim margins in Parliament, mount a vote of no confidence and ride Simpson-Miller's popularity back into power. This element within the PNP had told Phillips that they would then support a move by him to internally challenge Portia once the PNP was returned to power. He commented that they clearly were motivated more by a desire to get back into power, than by any real desire to serve the people of Jamaica.

15. (C) When asked by the NAS Director if he would ever serve in another Simpson-Miller-led government, Phillips stated that he "never says never, but his answer is no; it would simply be too distasteful." (Comment: Prior to the aforementioned poll, all signs pointed to Phillips or his supporters leading a challenge against Simpson-Miller for leadership of the PNP in September 2008. Phillips now does not seem ready to do so given Simpson-Miller's current greater focus and energy. Post's other PNP sources confirm that the poll numbers have reinvigorated Simpson-Miller. Poll numbers just released on July 11, show that 48% believe that Simpson-Miller is doing only an "average" job as opposition leader, and 22% have a negative impression. Given that the PNP Congress is not until September, how this additional snapshot of public opinion may not tell us much about Phillips' eventual decision to challenge Simpson-Miller

16. (C) Phillips further opined that a return of Simpson-Miller, and her troubled former Minister of Telecommunications, Mines and Energy, Philip Paulwell, would exacerbate the Haitianization of Jamaica and Jamaican Politics. (Comment: Phillips' dislike of Simpson-Miller, insistence that he would not serve in another government run by her, and harsh criticism of the PNP's eighteen year reign, seem to smack a bit of convenient amnesia, as he served as Minister Without a Portfolio, Minister of Special Projects, Minister of Transport and Works, Minister of Health, and Minister of National Security over successive PNP terms in power from 1993 to 2007. However, as Minister of National Security, Phillips was regarded as a capable administrator of the Ministry and as a friend to the United States on Crime and Security matters.)

Critical Need to continue to support Commissioner Lewin

17. (C) Phillips confirmed Lewin's recounting of the events that lead to his disturbing June 3 resignation letter to the Police Services Commission. (Ref C, D) He stated that it was critical for the United States and its international partners (UK, Canada) to express in the clearest terms to the Prime Minister and current Minister of National Security our belief that Commissioner Lewin is an integral partner and that if Lewin absents himself from the JCF, our support will recede. Phillips also pressed the NAS Director to convey his opinion that the U.S. must support with funds and "boots on the ground" hard measures to identify, and prosecute, corrupt public officials, particularly high-level police officers.

18. (C) Phillips filled in his perspective on the purported strained relationship between Lewin and MacMillan, (Ref B) a story that the NAS Director has heard previously from other perhaps more objective sources. According to Phillips, MacMillan left the Jamaica Defence Force in 1986 "under a cloud," and the Chief of Staff at the time, Major General Neish, remained on the job longer to ensure that MacMillan would not be named to the top JDF job. According to Phillips, Lewin was not involved in MacMillan's dismissal, but as Lewin rose in the ranks, eventually obtaining the

position that MacMillan wanted, resentment built. Phillips also recounted that MacMillan was pushing for Lewin's replacement by Assistant Commissioner of Police Owen Ellington, who was a protégé of MacMillan's when he was Commissioner of Police from 1993 to 1996. Prime Minister Golding's close relationship with MacMillan, in addition to Ellington's own reputation as a capable and intelligent officer, perhaps helps to connect the dots as to why Ellington's name, repeatedly, has been at the top of Golding's short list for the job of Commissioner, despite purported linkages to criminal organizations. DAO Comment: MacMillan departed the JDF in 1986, and Neish was COS until 1990, which seems a long time to remain in office, if it were only to keep MacMillan out of the position. DAO has doubts that MacMillan has worked to replace Commissioner Lewin.

19. (C) Comment: Phillips can be both incredibly brilliant and devious when it suits his purposes and his comments against MacMillan and Golding should to be taken in context. It is troubling, however, that he accepted without protest the notion of the "Haitinization" of Jamaica, something that most Jamaicans would dismiss as a highly insulting and unlikely comparison. Serious consideration needs to be given to providing additional focused assistance to Jamaica to bolster its capacity to prevent its continuing downward, economic, social, and criminal spiral. End Comment.

JOHNSON